



## ***Protecting Your Open Space***

Safeguarding open space in Andover

A Citizen's Guide

### **Open Space in Andover**

Andover is blessed by an abundance of natural open space. More than 40% of the city remains undeveloped. This is a true community asset, since local and national research has shown that natural areas positively affect home values and consistently rank high on lists of homebuyer preferences.

This brochure is a quick summary of some of the things that are being done – and that you can do – to preserve this asset.

### **The Open Space Advisory Commission**

In 2006, the residents of Andover passed a levy to establish a \$2 million dollar fund to purchase land specifically to set aside as open space. The Open Space Commission was formed to evaluate opportunities to preserve open space and make recommendations to the city Council.

Since forming, the Commission has been evaluating the natural resources within the city, defining criteria to evaluate potential acquisitions, and investigating grant opportunities to maximize the limited funds available. Our first grant application is now in process.

Some important principles guide the work of the Open Space Commission:

- The city will use funds from the levy to acquire land and/or enter into land preservation agreements to **permanently protect natural areas**.
- All property transactions are “willing buyer, willing seller.” **Participation is strictly voluntary.**
- **Land from throughout the city** is eligible for the program. Properties that offer the best opportunity to preserve natural areas for the future have top priority.
- The Commission will **encourage and promote the efforts of individual property owners** to preserve the natural features of their land. There are many options for this, including conservation easements, which can provide financial compensation and tax benefits.
- The Commission meets at 7:00 p.m. on the second Wednesday of every month at Andover City Hall.  
**Members of the public are welcome!**

### **Open Space Update**

The city is continuing to work with property owners who are interested in preserving their land as open space for the enjoyment of residents now and in the future. The Open Space Advisory Commission and City Council are currently pursuing an opportunity to purchase property along the Rum River. Grant applications for the Natural and Scenic Area and Remediation Fund grant programs have been submitted to the Minnesota



Department of Natural Resources to reduce the cost to the city and to preserve funds for additional open space preservation opportunities in the future.

This year, the Open Space Advisory Commission will continue to review sites where property owners have previously expressed interest in open space preservation. Over the past few months several new property owners came forward and expressed their interest in working with the city. The Commission's goal is to recommend selected site to the council in time for the next DNR grant cycle in the spring of 2010.

### **Citizen's Preservation Efforts**

Feel free to contact Courtney Bednarz at the City of Andover if you have or know of a property that may merit Open Space preservation. See the contact information below.

The funds referendum funds are limited, so the City can only directly preserve a relatively small amount of land. Private Initiatives are encouraged. If you would like to preserve or restore your own land, there are a number of resources available. A good start would be the Open Space Commission's own website. See below.

### **Resources on the City of Andover website**

We have made some useful files and links available on the City of Andover website. To find them, go to [www.ci.andover.mn.us](http://www.ci.andover.mn.us). Click on the "Boards & Commissions" menu item at the side of the screen, and then "Open Space Advisory Commission." Some of these resources include:

- [A List of Frequently Asked Questions](#) about the Open Space Commission and Andover's efforts to preserve open spaces.
- **The OSAC News.** A newsletter about the Open Space Commission, coming events, and information about open space preservation. Contact Courtney Bednarz (below) for an e-mail subscription.
- [A Guide to Andover Plant Communities](#) that helps explain what is on your land and how it relates to the overall ecology of our area.
- [Land Protection Options: A Handbook for Minnesota Landowners.](#) A comprehensive guide to various programs that help landowners preserve their lands.
- [Natural Area Management Techniques.](#) A brief guide to specific techniques for preserving and restoring natural landscapes. It includes links to other, more comprehensive, guides to the topic.
- A link to the [Anoka Conservation District Website.](#) The Anoka Conservation District is a great source for local technical and financial assistance in our area.

### **Do you have questions on how to protect and preserve open space?**

Courtney Bednarz, the City Planner for Andover, would be happy to answer your questions and direct you to further resources. Here is his contact information:

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